

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element having a bone contacting surface and having at least one elongate opening for receiving a fixation element, said opening having a recessed ~~upwardly~~outwardly facing surface around the opening, said recessed ~~upwardly~~outwardly facing surface tapering towards the bone contacting surface from a first to a second smaller cross-section and a one-piece elongate insert for insertion in the opening wherein the insert exhibits a continuous external portion that is generally complementary to the recessed ~~upwardly~~outwardly facing surface and having a resilient extension ~~a multi-section internal portion~~ complimentary to an internal surface of the opening extending from the second smaller cross-section toward the bone contacting surface, the extension having two sidewalls on opposite sides of, and parallel to, an axis which extends parallel to a longitudinal axis of the elongated load bearing element and the sidewalls extend at right angles to the bone contacting surface and wherein the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, and in which a surface adjacent the bone contacting surface surrounding the elongate opening is flat and is recessed or forms part of ~~exhibits a bottom surface extending generally parallel to or co-linear with the bone contacting surface for holding the insert in the opening wherein the resilient extension~~ an internal portion ~~section~~ of the insert exhibits at least one projection having an upwardly facing surface for extending along the flat ~~bottom~~ surface surrounding the elongate opening for holding the insert in the opening ~~of the opening~~.

2. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert projection is mounted on the ~~at least one~~

~~deflectable~~ sidewalls ~~so internal portion section~~ that each projection extends along free ends of the two ~~an elongate~~ sidewalls of the insert internal portion.

3. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 2 wherein the two sidewalls ~~internal portion section~~ forms a planar side of the insert and the projection is inclined to a principal plane of the load-bearing element along the axis and the extension includes a groove running in a plane parallel to the principal plane of the load-bearing element.

4. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 3 wherein the projection extends away from the central through-bore and is intended for engagement with the load-bearing element bottom surface.

5. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the projection can engage the bottom surface and remain engaged with the bottom surface and cannot be released until the fixation element has been removed from the opening.

6. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 4 wherein the projection interacts with a complementary area in the area of the bottom surface of the load-bearing element.

7. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the underside of the load-bearing element adjacent the internal surface to form the bottom surface, in which the projection can be engaged, so that the insert, does not extend beyond the bone contacting surface.

8. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the projection can be engaged under a bottom surface of the load-bearing element which is co-linear with the bone contacting surface so that the insert extends beyond the aforementioned bone contacting surface and acts as a spacer.

9. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis normal to the principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

10. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in a longitudinal direction of the load bearing element.

11. (currently amended) A bone stabilization device comprising:

an elongated bone plate having a plurality of apertures extending through the bone plate, at least one of said apertures having a recessed surface which is arranged around the opening and which extends and tapers inwardly from a larger cross-section at an upper surface of said load-bearing element to a smaller cross-section, sidewalls including two planar walls on opposite sides of and parallel to an axis which extends parallel to a longitudinal axis of the elongated bone plate, the ~~sidewalls forming said aperture~~ extending perpendicularly to a bone contacting surface from the smaller cross-section of the recessed surface and at least one one-piece insert having a body with a threaded bore and a first portion with a continuous outer surface complimentary to the recessed surface of said aperture

and a second portion having an outer surface complimentary to said sidewalls of said aperture, at least part of said aperture is surrounded by a flat bottom surface and said insert second portion outer surface having ~~two~~ a planar resilient ~~sidewall~~~~extension~~ extending parallel to the two planar ~~sidewalls~~ of the aperture and each sidewall including a projection for engaging said bottom surface.

12. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein said aperture has a central axis extending from a top plate surface to a bottom plate surface and said bore in said insert has a central axis inclined with respect to said aperture central axis.

13. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein the aperture is in the form of an elongate slot.

14. (currently amended) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 13 wherein said insert second portion has an elongate outer surface for placement adjacent an elongate inner surface of said slot and said projection on the two resilient planar ~~sidewall~~~~extension~~ extends along~~between~~ said adjacent inner slot surfaces.

15. (previously presented) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 14 wherein said bottom surface is a ledge formed around at least the planar walls of said inner surface of said aperture and said resilient projection engaging said ledge.

16. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element, having a bone contacting surface and an opposite upper surface and at least

one elongated opening between said two surfaces, at least one fixation element, and at least one one-piece insert exhibiting a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, wherein said at least one elongated opening of the load-bearing element comprises internal surfaces including two planar side walls perpendicular to the bone contacting surface which extend on opposite sides of and parallel to an axis which extends parallel to a longitudinal axis of the elongated load bearing element and at right angles to the bone contacting surface and a recessed surface surrounding the elongated opening extending from the planar side walls tapering outwardly to the upper surface of the load-bearing element, wherein said insert is insertable in said opening and exhibits an external form including a continuous first portion complimentary to the outwardly tapered recessed surface surrounding the opening and a second portion including two inwardly deflectable planar sidewalls that are generally complementary to the two planar sidewalls of the internal surfaces of the elongate opening and at least one inwardly deflectable sidewall portion including a projection, which projection has an upwardly facing surface which extends along a flat bottom surface of the load-bearing element adjacent the elongate opening which flat surface is recessed from adjacent and parallel to or forms part of a linear ~~with the bone contacting surface of the load-bearing element adjacent the opening.~~

17. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert or the projection extends along each sidewall of the insert.

18. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 17 wherein the planar sidewalls are configured in a flexible manner in the inner direction of the opening of the

load-bearing element, the sidewalls including a groove running in a principal plane of the load-bearing element.

19. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 18 wherein the projection extends away from the central through-bore for engagement with the load-bearing element, the projection extending outwardly of the opening sidewall when the insert sidewall conforms with the opening sidewall.

20. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16, wherein the insert can be fixed in the load-bearing element by means of a fixation element in the opening and remain engaged with the load bearing element and cannot be released until the aforementioned fixation element has been removed from the opening.

Claim 21 (canceled)

22. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the bottom surface of the load-bearing element adjacent the elongate opening sidewalls, in which the projection can be engaged, so that the insert, does not extend beyond the bone contacting surface.

23. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the projection can be engaged under the bottom surface of the load-bearing element so that the insert extends beyond the bottom surface and acts as a spacer.

24. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis normal to the

principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

25. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in the longitudinal direction of the elongated load bearing element.

26. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element with at least one elongate opening for receiving a fixation element, the opening having internal surfaces including a recessed surface which is arranged around the opening and which extends and tapers inwardly from an upper surface of the load-bearing element towards a bone contacting surface, the opening having two planar sidewalls along an elongate portion of the opening extending on opposite sides of and parallel to an axis which extends parallel to a longitudinal axis of the load bearing element and at right angles to the load bearing surface ~~parallel to a central axis of the opening which extends from the upper surface to the bone contacting surface~~ and a one-piece insert that may be inserted in the opening wherein the insert exhibits an external form that is generally complementary to the internal surface of the opening, and wherein the insert has a continuous first portion complimentary to the tapered recessed surface around the opening and a ~~multi-section~~ second portion including a section having a pair of sidewalls ~~projection~~ complimentary to the planar sidewalls of the opening, the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the fixation element, and in which the implantable orthopedic device has a bottom surface, the sidewalls having a projection extending along the bone contacting ~~bottom~~ surface for holding the insert in the opening,

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wherein the insert sidewalls~~section~~ with the projection is
inwardly deflectable.